

CONNECTED

YOUTH FOR CHRIST of Northern Ohio - Newsletter

Connecting Teens To Jesus Christ And His Church

July 2024

They All Scream for Ice Cream! | Steve Pausch

Graduation ceremonies, graduation parties, and trying to catch up with those seniors one last time before they head off into the world has been a large part of our June schedule here at YFC. Summer is here, school is out, and teens seem to be even busier than they were during the school year. It has been very difficult to find a time to get with teens and go out to dinner to talk about spiritual things and what is next in their lives. Everyone just seems so busy. But we have found that almost everyone has time to go out for ice cream. Whether it's a cone at the local spot or one of the new Frostys at Wendy's, they all say yes to ice cream. They seem to say yes because it doesn't seem like much of a time commitment, but it really has turned into many long discussions on a bench or table and talking about very deep topics. Is there something magic about ice cream that helps teens open up and talk? No, but I think one of the things that makes this ministry so unique is that we are out there daily asking questions and caring about the issues in the lives of teens. Our staff are just doing what Jesus did with the woman at the well, taking the time to stop listen and care. I am sure if they had ice cream back then, she would have enjoyed that, too.

Thank you for making this ministry possible with your prayers and financial support keeping us involved in the lives of teens. The rest of the summer we have camping trips, fishing events, overnight trips, coaching and countless sit down for an ice cream times with teens. Please pray for more opportunities with teens to show them what it means to follow Jesus.

Vanilla or chocolate?

Gotta Go... my ice cream is melting!

P.S. Would you be willing to help us take teens for ice cream this summer with an additional gift to help cover the costs of taking teens out for a cone? We are hoping and planning to have a cone or Frosty with at least 100 teens before summer is over.

Have a "Cone" and a smile!



Water Wars 2024 | Matt Mountjoy

As many of you know, it has been a tradition since I have been with The Garage, to mark the end of every school year and transition into our summer schedule with “Water Wars.” This is an event that basically turns the Garage parking lot into a giant water fight. I have to say this year’s rendition was probably my favorite yet, and not even because somehow for the first time ever the water didn’t end up making its way inside leading to an hour of cleanup! (That certainly was a cool change, though) The first really exciting thing that happened was just the huge amount of kids we had show up including about 8 new kids. The night was a great opportunity filled with fun and an opportunity to talk about God with the biggest group of students that we had all year long! There were so many kids, we had to go pick up extra pizzas, which is a great problem to have. Another really fun thing about the night was just how much fun was had. The weather rolling in was not going to be good, so I needed to have a backup plan of some silly inside games we could all play. In the end, the rain did come, but this group of kids decided “we’re going to get wet in a water fight anyways, can we do it all?!” So we had a giant water fight AND played a few wild games inside as well.



The coolest thing about this year’s Water Wars was seeing how the night developed amongst the kids. A unique thing about Water Wars is that we combine our two bigger weekly groups. The two groups have very different dynamics, and it is a cool chance for two groups of students, who normally wouldn’t interact in their day to day lives, to come together. As the night started out, there was a clear divide. No one was being rude, but throughout the lesson and dinner there was a literal line down the middle of the room separating the two groups. However, during the water fight something funny happened. One football player broke the invisible wall and BLASTED one of the middle school girls who comes on Thursday nights. From that moment on, things changed and I watched the two groups become one. We had freshly graduated seniors including the student body president laughing and joking with kids who are incredibly shy and rarely talk outside of their friend group. We even had one of the most athletic kids in Wadsworth history losing a best of 3 rock-paper-scissors game to maybe the tiniest middle school girl I have ever seen. It was such a unique chance to see for a night God to bring together a bunch of very different kids and unite them in fun and great conversations!



God Can Use Stains | Laurie Beal

On a recent Thursday night, I was running around at home getting ready to head out to the Garage for our teen night. I got a message from another leader asking if I had left yet. He then asked if we had a washing machine at the Garage or if I could bring some cleaning supplies to get blood stains out of clothes and said that a teen had a skateboarding accident on the way there and was pretty upset.

I scooped up some hydrogen peroxide, dawn dish soap, a magic eraser and a multitude of spray cleaners and headed quickly out the door. Not knowing too much further information, I was concerned for this young man's injuries as I took the less than a mile drive to the Garage.

I jumped out of the car with the supply bag and could see that the teen WAS upset. He was glad to see me and immediately asked if I could get ALL the stains out of his pants? I said..."first things first, are you ok?"

He explained that he was not worried about himself (reluctantly, he did accept a Band-Aid) but was very worried that he would get in trouble if he came home with stains on his clothes. As I looked down to the spots he was pointing out, I realized he had WHITE pants on. Oh boy.

I re-explained that my main concern was to evaluate his injuries, and then we'd figure the clothes situation out. I also suggested that maybe his parents, too, would be most concerned with his well-being and asked if he thought that was the case. He was not convinced and said they specifically told him not to get anything on the pants because they were new, and he didn't want to disappoint them.

His injuries were, thankfully, minor but the stains were not. Blood, grass stains and dirt were blended all over the name-brand sweatpants. And the stains had seeped through to the inside of the material, also. Amazingly, there were no rips.

I had him select an outfit from our teen clothing giveaway room, and as he went to the bathroom to change, I set up a cleaning station in the cafe kitchen. He brought me the pants and as he was walking away to head outside, he again asked if I could get ALL the stains out? I told him I wasn't sure but that I did have 4 kids that all had played sports, and I had some experience with stains, and I'd try my best.

For more than an hour I worked on this unexpected project as the teens and other leaders went about the ministry night outside. The teen hoping for a miracle came in a few times to check the progress. He looked skeptical, but hopeful, every time. As I gently scrubbed and figured out which techniques and which products gave the best results with each type of blemish, I couldn't help but think about some parallels.

How often do we humans mess up and cause our lives and circumstances to be stained and dirty? How often do the stains seep into our insides? How often do we scramble to try and clean ourselves up before we turn towards our heavenly Father's gaze? How often do we fear disappointing Him and try to hide from Him, "knowing" that He'd surely love us less upon sight of our iniquities?

Thankfully, we have a God that, in reality, loves us unconditionally and is the only one that can truly clean us up, anyways. He wants us to come to Him, regardless of what type of stains we are carrying. He wants us to trust Him to remove the stains fully and permanently.

Regarding the pants, I was able to remove all but a couple faint marks. I dribbled Dawn dish soap on each faint mark and put the wet pants in a plastic bag. I told the teen to put them in the washer as soon as he got home. And to only dry them in the dryer if the stains were gone completely.

When I saw him the next week, he had a big smile when he saw me and said "all the stains are gone! Thank you!"

I was glad to have been able to help him in that way. But I am humbly, beyond blessed, and even more glad to be able to be part of a youth ministry that regularly gets to speak TRUTH into the hearts of young people. It is a privilege to be entrusted with the opportunity to tell these teens the Good News that "He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their

wounds." (Psalm 147:3) And that "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us." (Psalm 103:12) And "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (Romans 12: 1-2)

We are so thankful for YOUR support that allows us to help give teens the Hope of Jesus and the Hope that they can have their "stains" removed as far as the east is from the west.

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